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BRITISH ❧ ❧

HONDURAS

AND ITS ❧ ❧ ❧

RESOURCES

By
WILFRED COLLET.
C.M.G.

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LONDON:
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MAKING THE HOPE CREEK BRIDGE.



AT MACARONI BRANCH CREEK. (16 $\frac{1}{4}$ MILES).

The Stann Creek Railway, British Honduras

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PREFACE.

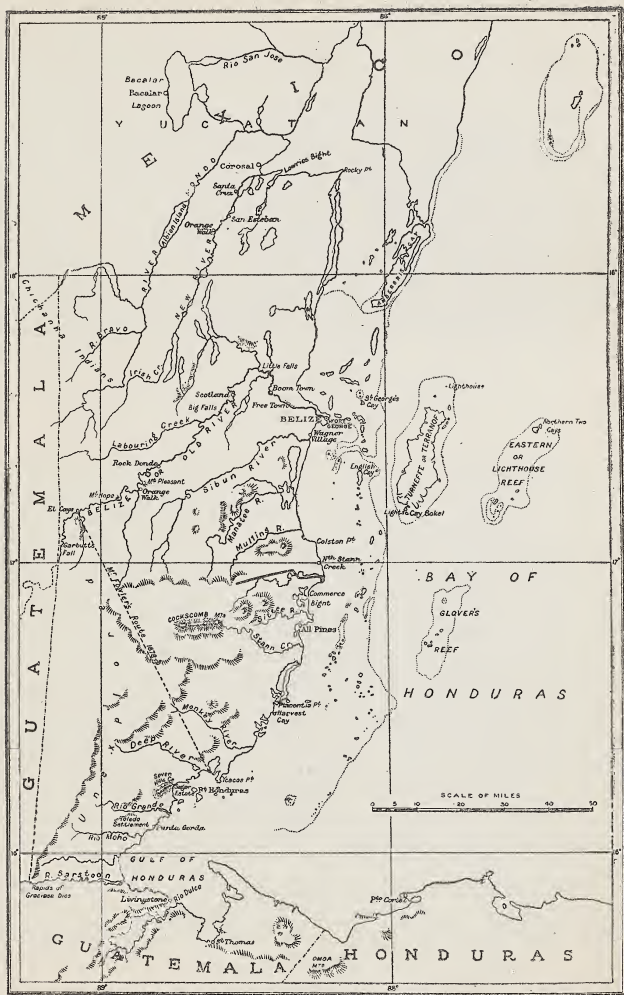
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Though British Honduras has an area actually greater than that of the British West Indian Islands combined, and though it was settled over two hundred and seventy years ago, it is surprising how little is known about the colony at home. It is with the object, therefore, of calling attention to its immense though undeveloped resources, and to the opportunities which it affords for the profitable investment of capital that this pamphlet is published. It comprises a lecture delivered under the auspices of the West India Committee, on July 22nd last, by Mr. Wilfred Collet, C.M.G., who has been Colonial Secretary of British Honduras since 1905, and is consequently in a position to speak with authority regarding the colony and its possibilities.

ALGERNON E. ASPINALL.

THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE ROOMS,
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November, 1909.

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BRITISH HONDURAS.

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BY WILFRED COLLET, C.M.G.

BRITISH HONDURAS is situated on the Atlantic side Central America. Its capital Belize, is about 300 nautical miles due west of Jamaica, and about 850 miles nearly due south of New Orleans.

The history of the colony is peculiar. As far back as the year 1638 British enterprise started the mahogany and logwood industry, which has continued up to the present day, and, indeed, still forms the most important industry of the colony. Apparently none but the British ever did anything to develop a trade; but for a long while the territory was recognised as being Spanish. Various agreements were entered into with Spain, the effect of which was that the British were to be allowed to continue the timber industry, but might not settle for any purpose not connected with that industry. The British Government seems to have done its best to keep its subjects within the terms of the agreement, but the authorities of the neighbouring Spanish colonies tried to drive the British out. The last attempt was made in 1798, and was frustrated by the settlers at the battle of St. George's Caye, on the 10th September of that year. Since then Spain has made no attempt to exercise authority over the territory, and the settlers have regarded it as being British by right of conquest. As a matter of fact, they have a higher right. It was the British, and only the British, who ever occupied

or made use of the territory. They found no one there, and turned no one out. Even the Central American Indians, who are now living within the colony, are either recent settlers, or the descendants of others who settled within the territory while it was under British management.

On the north the river Hondo divides the colony from the Republic of Mexico. The north of the Hondo is as rich in mahogany as the south, or richer. But the north was inhabited by unfriendly Indians; and the British settlers, therefore, gained no permanent footing on the northern side. It is only comparatively recently that order has been established among these Indians by the Mexican Government. Of the western boundary about half adjoins Mexican territory, and half that of Guatemala. The boundary line practically coincides with the limits within which the transport of timber to the coast was comparatively easy.

On the south the river Sarstoon separates the colony from the territory of the Republic of Guatemala.

In the earlier days, as there was no effective Spanish Government, the settlers governed themselves, holding public meetings annually, at which they elected magistrates, and passed laws binding the community.

In 1786 a Superintendent was appointed by the Home Government, but from 1790 to 1797 elected magistrates again ruled the settlements. Since then Superintendents were regularly appointed until 1862, when the settlement was declared a colony, and a Lieutenant-Governor was appointed, subordinate to the Governor of Jamaica. In 1884 the colony was rendered independent of Jamaica.

I have touched on the past history of the colony, because it helps to explain its present industrial position. The settlers went to the colony only for the

purpose of cutting and exporting timber ; and it was agreed that they should do nothing else. There were no Spanish settlers, or native inhabitants, to pursue agricultural pursuits. The negroes whom the settlers took with them were wood-cutters, and for nearly three centuries the Creole negro has been born to the wood-cutting industry. The negro of British Honduras is one of the finest wood-cutters in the world. He does not show any great aptitude for agriculture. And so for over 200 years the exports of the colony were practically confined to mahogany, cedar, and logwood. This could not go on for ever. The price of logwood fell ; also that of mahogany and other timbers, though not to the same extent, and the difficulties of getting timber out increased. In the earliest days it could be obtained close to the river banks. As the most accessible places were cut out, it was necessary to go further back, haul the logs some distance to the river banks. But for the fact that nature renews the supply, the mahogany industry must have come to an end before now. But the seeds are scattered by the wind, and fall in places where many take root. Where cutting takes place trees are found of different sizes. Those of sufficient diameter are cut out and the other trees left. Cutting may cease in a particular area for any number of years from five to 25, when trees will be found which have become of merchantable size, and cutting is resumed. But the timber industry is not at present open to much further development. It is to be hoped that private owners and the Government will enter on a system of reforestation ; but the benefit of this would not be felt by the present generation. There is plenty of untouched mahogany in the country which can only be got at if means of transport are provided, which have hitherto not existed. It is probable, however, that any opening up of new country, and its

settlement, for agricultural industries will bring good mahogany within sufficiently easy reach to enable it to be cut at a profit.

It was recognised long ago by a few people that if the colony was to develop it must turn its attention to agriculture. One of the most important industries entered on was the production of sugar, and for some years there was a small export of this commodity. This was in the days when sugar realised from £25 to £30 a ton. The methods adopted were unscientific, and as the price of sugar fell, so the production in the colony fell off; and now very little more is made than will meet the demands for local consumption, and the price is kept up by a tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound on all imported sugar.

It was Lieutenant-Governor Barlee who took the most important step towards maintaining agricultural industry in the colony. He saw that there was close by, in the United States, a market for fruit, and he changed the course of the mail from Jamaica to New Orleans, thereby securing that regularity of communication without which a trade in fruit cannot be carried on. The result is that a substantial trade has sprung up in bananas, plantains, and coco-nuts, and we have an excellent mail service at slight cost. For a weekly direct service to and from New Orleans we pay a subsidy of \$12,000, and the steamers are exempt from port dues and compulsory pilotage. On the other hand, the service earns, at Postal Union rates, between \$5,000 and \$6,000 for the benefit of the colony. In the ordinary course the mails reach London 15 days after leaving Belize, and *vice versa*.

The annual export of bananas is about 650,000 bunches; about 5,000,000 coco-nuts are exported, and 1,000,000 plantains.

Another industry which has recently started, and promises to be of importance, is that of cacao. Cacao is indigenous in the colony, and some settlers make

their own cocoa from wild cacao trees. The cacao produced is of high quality, and has fetched top prices in the English market. In 1901 the export was only 665 lb., in 1903 it was 8,934 lb., in 1905 it was 18,988 lb., and in 1907 46,435.

The foregoing are agricultural industries which may be said to have established themselves in the colony.

Another industry which may become important is that of rubber. Rubber, the produce of indigenous trees, is already exported to a slight extent. Plantations are, however, being started, notably by the Belize Estate and Produce Company, and by Messrs. Bernard and Hermann Cramer. As these latter gentlemen have succeeded in producing a high grade cacao, there is reason to hope that their experiments in rubber will also be successful. The most extensive plantations are those of the Belize Estate and Produce Company. They were unfortunate in suffering from exceptional droughts both in 1907 and 1908. Notwithstanding this, it appears from the latest reports that in 1908 their rubber trees had made excellent progress. As far as I can judge rubber production should become one of the standard industries of the colony.

To sum up the present situation, I consider that, if no special efforts are made to obtain more population, the following will be the staple agricultural products of the Colony:—Plantains, Bananas, Coco-nuts, Cacao and Rubber.

Their production will increase as the population increases. There is ample land available for the cultivation of each.

There are other articles which undoubtedly can be grown in the colony, but which I do not expect to be grown for export unless our labour supply is greatly increased. First there is sugar. There is plenty of land available for sugar planting, close to

the banks of navigable rivers. But now-a-days the sugar industry is not remunerative, unless carried on on a large scale, and in a highly scientific manner. Our existing agricultural industries absorb all the available labour, and require more. If a sugar factory were established it would be necessary to import labourers to produce the amount of cane necessary to make the enterprise remunerative. But should we once be in a position to obtain the labour there is no doubt about the suitability of the colony for the industry, if the necessary capital and scientific knowledge are forthcoming.

Another possible industry is cotton. Sea Island cotton does not appear to do well; but favourable reports have been received on samples of Upland cotton. Cotton is indigenous in Central America, and the Indians who reside in the colony produce it, spin it, and weave it for their own use. A gentleman, interested in planting near Belize, told me that he thought he could grow it remuneratively at present rates of labourers' wages, if he could only rely on being able to get the labour.

Rice of high quality is produced; but not enough for home consumption. So good is this rice that the Japanese Government, having seen a sample at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, gave an order for 60 sacks of it. Only one sack could be obtained. A plentiful supply of labour at fair rates is necessary if an export trade in rice is ever to arise; but there is in the colony plenty of land eminently suitable for its cultivation.

When I have stated that there is plenty of land available for the production of various articles I am, no doubt, vague. I am not in a position to say how much land is available for each product; but I will, I think, convince you that there is more than enough for 100 times our present output. It is not land that we require. It is population. To illustrate

this I will compare the area of the colony with that of the British West Indian Islands, viz. :—Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands.

Their combined area is 7,499 square miles, while that of British Honduras is 7,562 square miles, or more than the total area of the islands named. But, in 1907, the population of these colonies was estimated at 1,661,538, while that of British Honduras was estimated to be 41,007. The other colonies, viewed as a whole, are 40 times as densely populated as British Honduras. Trinidad and Jamaica are 30 times as densely populated. It seems strange that so old a settlement should have so small a population; but it must be remembered that for 160 years agriculture was forbidden, as was any kind of settlement, not necessary to wood-cutting. And, although the area of the colony is comparatively large, the sea frontage is small. Roughly speaking, we have about 160 nautical miles of coast, and only 100 miles of this can be approached by large vessels. The lands of the other colonies named have, on the average, been ten times more accessible than those of British Honduras.

And even when agricultural industries were started, the colony does not seem to have appreciated the necessity of improving the means of communication. In the early nineties it became necessary to increase the Customs dues, in order to make the revenue balance the expenditure; but when equilibrium was restored, instead of spending the surplus money on public works, the colony took off the extra $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duties that had been levied. The colony was, however, waking up. In 1903 and 1904 an advisory engineer was employed to examine the colony, and report on such schemes of development as might appear to be practicable. One of the first schemes undertaken was the improvement of the Belize river.

This stream runs for about 150 miles from the western boundary of the colony to Belize, on the coast. About 30 miles from Belize there are rapids, and other rapids are met at frequent intervals in the rest of the river. Two great obstructions to navigation have been removed, at places known as Little Falls and Big Falls, partly by crushing the rocks with a specially-designed machine, and partly by blasting. In other places rocks have been removed as well as snags and overhanging branches.

Until 1906 goods intended for the western part of the colony had to be carried during the wet season in pitpans, which generally took three weeks to go from Belize to El Cayo. Accidents were frequent, and resulted in great loss of goods. Now, during eight months of the year, goods are taken up in motor launches, which usually perform the journey in two and a-half days, and have done it in 27 hours. For eight months of the year about nine launches run every week. During the dry season the launch carrying the mail runs for about two-thirds of the distance, mules carrying the mails for the rest of the way. The improvement that has been effected in the river has practically had the effect of opening up new country.

The New River, in the northern part of the colony, has also had obstructions removed from it.

That part of the colony which is north of Belize is for the most part low lying. It is watered by the river Hondo, which forms our boundary with Mexico, by the New River, which runs through the Corosal and Orange Walk districts, and by the Belize river. All these rivers are of importance. The Hondo river and the New River may be navigated by vessels drawing 4 ft. of water for a distance of about 60 miles. Between Belize and the mouths of these rivers vessels drawing as much as 6 ft. of water can navigate in sheltered waters, protected from the ocean by coral

reefs and cayes. These cayes produce coco-nuts, but are capable of producing much more than they do.

The Corosal district is distinguished from the rest of the colony by having a number of roads suited for wheel traffic. Elsewhere the roads are only intended for mounted or animal traffic; but the absence of good roads is largely made up for by the extent of the waterways.

The Corosal and Orange Walk districts produce Indian corn fruit, and sugar. Rubber and sapodilla gum are obtained from indigenous trees, and rubber is being planted. Mahogany and logwood are also obtained in these as well as other districts of the colony.

Between Corosal and Belize is the Northern River, in the neighbourhood of which are mahogany and logwood works. A consignment of fruit is sent every week to Belize, for shipment to the United States.

The capital of the colony is, of course, situated in the district of the same name. It is a distributing centre, not only for the colony but for other parts of Central America. Half of our imports are re-exported. I have already mentioned the Belize river. Another important river is the Sibun. This river is only navigated in the ordinary sense of the word for a distance of about 25 miles; but it flows for about 60 miles, and is available for floating down mahogany rafts. A large mahogany business is done in the neighbourhood of these two rivers.

The Cayo district is to the west of Belize. The principal town of the district is situated at the junction of two branches of the Belize river. Its villages are inhabited mostly by American Indians, who produce corn, sugar, and coffee for their own use. Goods for the Peten district of Guatemala pass through here, being carried by the motor launches to El Cayo, and then being taken on by mule packs to Peten. A

number of persons are engaged in bleeding rubber and sapodilla, in the region between El Cayo and Belize. Sapodilla gum, or chicle, is a principal constituent in chewing gum, and nearly the whole export goes to the United States. A quantity of chicle and some rubber comes from Peten, and is carried down from the Cayo to Belize by launch.

Negotiations are in progress, or perhaps have been completed, for the sale of a tract of land to a syndicate, who undertake to plant 1,500 acres in rubber, or other products. There is, I believe, a considerable quantity of untouched mahogany land in this district. Some mahogany lately cut there was found to be of unusually fine grain, and fetched very high prices. Improved communication with Belize makes the working expenses less than they would have been formerly, and this has helped the industry.

In the Cayo district there is plenty of undulating land, of good running water, and of good soil. Probably it would not pay to grow bananas there, owing to the heavy cost of transport, as compared with the price realised. But if labour can be obtained it should be highly suitable for the cultivation of rubber and cacao, and possibly of coffee. Cattle thrive, and there is plenty of land available for grazing.

In the lower reaches of the Belize river there is a fair amount of good land, but not always, I believe, with such a subsoil as to make it suitable for deep-rooted trees. About ten miles from Belize a company has been making experiments with rice and cotton. So far as the experiments have gone they seem to show that the soil is suitable.

South of the Sibun river, and about 15 miles from Belize, is the Manatee region. The Government is opening up the country between Manatee and Belize. To start with, the construction of a new road has been undertaken from Belize to the Sibun river and then on

to a point on the old track to the Cayo. This road was thought of, and actually commenced some 40 years ago, and was given up on account of the difficulty of crossing certain swamps. This difficulty has been got over by constructing the road, by means of a grab dredger, which cut its way from the Sibun river to the sea. It has cut a canal about 20 ft. wide and 5 ft. 6 in. deep for a length of about a mile and a-half. With the spoil from the canal a hard firm road bed has been formed. While this canal was made for the purpose of constructing the road, it has had two other results. Firstly, it has acted as a drain to the country at the back, much of which is low lying. Land which before was useless is now available for grazing and other purposes, and other land has been improved. Secondly, the canal offers a means by which doreys and similar craft can enter the Sibun river without having to pass a dangerous bar. The sea end of the canal is liable to silting, so that it may be necessary to haul the doreys from the seashore to the canal, but provision is made in the current estimates for remedying this. The north Manatee lagoon comes very close to the Sibun river, and a small experimental canal has been dug between the river and the lagoon. This canal will be enlarged. There is a natural connection between the northern and southern lagoons, so that when the work is finished there will be a fair extent of inland navigation available for small vessels, which are not safe in either the Sibun or Manatee bars. As soon as we get south of the Sibun river we come to undulating country, suitable for growing almost anything. Fruit is regularly exported from Manatee, and very fine rice is grown there for home consumption. The Government still has land there available for settlement. The Manatee lands will have a great advantage in their proximity to the capital. Good streams of water falls into the lagoons. The place is frequently

visited as a holiday resort. There are some very interesting caves in the neighbourhood, which are well worthy of notice.

South of Manatee we came into the Stann Creek district, south again of which is the Toledo district. The circumstances of these districts are somewhat different from those of the northern districts. The northern half of the colony may be said to belong to the timber industry, and the southern to agriculture. It is true that there is agriculture in the north and timber-cutting in the south; but it is in the south that most has been done in the way of agriculture, while a good deal of the timber is at present difficult of access. The south has no rivers like those of the north, but still, for ease of transport, cultivation has taken place chiefly on the banks of such streams as there are—streams which are navigable for doreys for distances of ten to 15 miles. In some cases short tramways carry fruit to the coast. Bananas are grown at Mullin's river, Stann Creek, Sittee river, Sennis, Monkey river, and other places, and once a week a steamer for New Orleans or Mobile collects fruit at these places. At Stann Creek the Government is constructing the first railway of the colony. The inland terminus is situated some 25 miles from the coast, in the centre of a block of rich land, which the United Fruit Company of Boston is arranging to buy from the Government. Possibly at this moment the transfer may have been completed.* The company undertakes to bring a certain area into cultivation every year, until the whole area suitable for cultivation has been cultivated. Not only is it hoped that operations by the company will increase the general trade of the colony, but it is hoped that it will give an example to smaller planters of better methods than those now adopted.

*The Agreement between the Government and the United Fruit Company has now been completed.—A.E.A.

A little nearer to the coasts are blocks of land belonging to the Western Lands Syndicate and the British Honduras Syndicate. The railway runs right through these lands. The Western Lands Syndicate is in communication with the Government with respect to cultivating a portion of these lands, and I believe is willing to sell part of its lands for what it may consider adequate remuneration. The address of the syndicate in England is Parliament Chambers, 5, Parliament Street, Hull. Should the scarcity of labour only be overcome I think any person, having the necessary capital, and being acquainted with tropical agriculture, would do well in taking up this land. Nearer again to the coast the Government has some good land; but, as the line runs near a river navigable by doreys, a good deal of the land adjoining the line has already been taken up, either by purchase or on lease. Provision has been made in this year's estimates for the construction of roads to facilitate the transport of fruit from these lands to the railway. The distance is anything from half-a-mile to three miles.

The sea terminus is not at Stann Creek itself. Although there is a protecting reef some ten miles to the west, the anchorage is exposed to a long sweep of north and north-east winds, which frequently makes the discharging of vessels a matter of difficulty. The line, therefore, runs south for about three miles to Commerce Bight, where a pier has been constructed, and where steamers can be laden and discharged alongside the train. At the very highest tides there is a depth of 24 ft. at the pier head. At the very lowest the depth is not less than 21 ft. The bottom is soft, and if a vessel were to come a little too close in, it would receive no damage. Buoys and dolphins have been placed to prevent vessels bumping against the pier in the event of their being any

sea ; but they will seldom be necessary, as the land protects the pier from the points from which heavy weather is generally experienced. I have personal experience of the excellence of Commerce Bight as an anchorage. I left it one day in a motor launch, and found the water like a millpond. Before ten minutes had elapsed I found myself in very rough water. A little beyond Stann Creek we were unable to make any progress, and had to return to Commerce Bight. On my return there the water was not so smooth as when I started, but, with the dolphins and buoys we now have, a steamer would have been quite safe alongside the pier.

The railway runs to the foot of the mountains on the west. To the north and south of it there is land, through which it would be comparatively easy to construct branch lines for about eight miles in each direction. The route to Mullin's river, on the north, has actually been surveyed. At Sittee river, on the south, is the cacao plantation of Mr. B. Cramer.

In the centre of the Stann Creek district are the Cockscomb mountains—a region only partially explored. It is not improbable that with the development of the district a sanatorium will be established at some place in these mountains. Gold has been found, and it is possible that when these regions have been more thoroughly examined they may be found to be a source of mineral wealth.

The Toledo district of the colony is so called from the settlement formed in 1868 by Messrs. Toledo and Young. The settlers were Americans, of European descent. The soil is very fertile, and the settlers produce nearly everything that they require for home consumption, including sugar, cacao, and coffee. A mahogany industry is also carried on. The settlement is connected by road with the port of Punta Gorda, where the merchants of the district reside, and where the Government

offices are situated. On the Tunash and Sarstoon rivers are the cacao plantations of Mr. H. J. Cramer. On the Tunash river Mr. C. B. Steinbrugge has purchased a tract of land from the Government, on which he undertakes to plant rubber trees. The banks of the Monkey river, and the Swasey and Bladen branches, are occupied by settlers, with small plantations of bananas.

The land of the colony may be roughly divided into four classes, viz., swampy land, pine ridge, broken pine ridge, and cohune ridge; the last-named comprising the finest land. It is so called because the cohune palm is found in it in great abundance. The nut of the cohune palm gives a very fine oil, but no commercial use has yet been made of it, owing to the difficulty of extracting the kernels from the hard nut. The nuts are of different sizes, and the difficulty is to provide a machine that will crack the nuts of any size, without injuring the kernels. Various patents have recently been taken out for machines to effect this purpose, and at least one patentee claims that his machine is successful. The cost of bringing the nuts to the machine has up to now been heavy, but this difficulty will probably be met by bringing the machines to the neighbourhood of the nuts, instead of bringing the nuts a long distance to the machines. At any rate, I hope that machines will be placed at points on the Stann Creek railway, within easy reach of the cohune palms. The cost of transporting the kernels to the coast will then be light. If the difficulty as to the machine has really been got over, the cohune industry may become more important than that of mahogany.

Cattle have not been raised to any large extent, and then principally only to supply animals for hauling timber. There is plenty of grazing land in the colony, and even if it may not pay to raise cattle

for export, it will always be possible to raise what we may require for ourselves, even if our population increase fifty times.

The Government owns large quantities of land in the Toledo, Stann Creek, and Cayo districts; and smaller quantities in the other districts. Until recently the Government land was sold at \$1 per acre, the Government paying the cost of survey, which, in the case of small holdings, usually exceeded the price given. The Government, therefore, lost money on its sales of land. This would have been of little importance if a substantial portion of the land sold had been put into cultivation. But more often than not this was not the case. A different policy has lately been adopted. The price required for land now is either in addition to the cost of survey, or is high enough to more than cover the cost of survey. Sales also take place on condition that a certain area is put under cultivation, and an indefensible title for the whole area purchased is not given until the conditions have been carried out. Failure to comply with the condition does not involve a forfeiture of the whole area, but a forfeiture in proportion to the failure. Thus, if the purchaser of 100 acres undertakes to put 50 acres into cultivation within seven years, and at expiry of that time has only put in 30 acres, he will receive an indefensible grant of the 30 acres actually cultivated, and of another 30 acres selected by the Government from the same block. Apart from this, the Government will, from time to time, give a purchaser indefensible grants in proportion to the amount of cultivation, so that the cultivator will always, when he requires financial assistance, be able to offer a security equal to the amount of his operations.

The price of land, and the conditions under which it will be sold, will vary according to locality and

circumstances. If the land is within a mile or so of a railway, or near a town, probably it will be stipulated that at least one-third must be cultivated within three years, or one-half within seven years, before an indefensible grant is given. Elsewhere so large a proportion will not be required. If land is wanted for grazing, conditions can be made for the keeping of so many head of cattle on the land during a fixed time. If land is wanted for extracting the natural products of the ground, stipulations will be required that at least a certain quantity shall be extracted. In every sale the Government must be satisfied that the purchaser means to use the land, and does not merely purchase with a view to being able to hold out at some future time for a large price from some one else.

All through this paper I have indicated that what the colony suffers from most is want of population and labourers. The excess of births over deaths every year is more than 500. This alone permits of some development. And, besides this, immigration into the colony exceeds the emigration. If we compare the numbers at the various censuses we find the rate of increase in proportion to population is as great as in most other colonies. It is in the proportion to the area of land that the increase is small.

In order to encourage immigration our land law permits the Governor in Council to make free grants of 20 acres of land to immigrants who will cultivate. I confess that till recently I did not think this was much of an inducement to agriculturists; but, in view of the improved facilities for transfer now provided at Stann Creek, Manatee, and near Belize, I think it may be worth while for small cultivators in other places to settle at the places named. I particularly would draw the attention of the people of Barbados to the colony.

All land not in a town is subject to a tax of $\frac{3}{4}$ cent per acre. Most cultivated land is liable to a further tax of $1\frac{1}{4}$ cents, and inland served by a railway a further tax not exceeding 8 cents per acre, may, with the consent of the Legislative Council, be levied.

There is an export duty on mahogany; and also one on chicle.

The Customs dues are light, the *ad valorem* duties being 10 per cent. Those duties may shortly be raised to 11 per cent., in order to provide interest and sinking fund for a loan to be expended on public improvements. For Customs purposes the value of goods is taken as the value at the port of export. In most places the valuation includes the cost of freight to the colony. Practically, therefore, a duty of 11 per cent. in British Honduras is the equivalent of 10 per cent. elsewhere. The first work to be undertaken will be the dredging of the channel through the bar of the river at Belize. Money has been voted for the purchase of a suction dredger for this purpose. The facilities for discharging cargo which this dredging will afford will, I believe, reduce the expense of landing goods by a greater amount than that of the increased duty.

With the spoil from the channel low land in Belize will be brought to a proper level, and some important building sites will be obtained for business and other purposes. The sale of some of these sites will help to pay the costs of the improvements.

In towns a tax not exceeding 6 per cent. of the annual value of property may be levied for local purposes. This tax is at present 4 per cent. in Belize, and 3 per cent. in other towns. In Belize there is a further tax of 1 per cent. for the support of the Fire Brigade.

Small royalties are charged on produce extracted from Crown land.

The only Excise duty is that on spirits, viz., \$1.25 the proof gallon; the duty on imported spirits being \$2.50 the proof gallon.

There is a telephone line from Belize to Orange Walk, Corosal, and Consejo in the north, and to Mullins river, Stann Creek, Monkey river, and Punta Gorda, and other places, in the south. There is no direct telegraphic communication with places beyond the colony, but messages are sent by boat from Consejo to Payo Obispo, in Mexican territory, and transmitted thence. Negotiations are in progress for a thorough service. There is a telephone exchange at Belize.

There is direct communication with England by the Harrison line of steamers, which call at Colon on the way. Eleven steamers call every year. The dates of sailing are fixed, and notified by the Company, before the commencement of the year. This certainty of the date of sailing is a great convenience, and, but for it, we should not make so large a proportion of our purchases in England as we do. The time taken on the passage is about 26 days. Therefore, passengers generally come by a quicker route. The steamers have, however, fair accommodation.

The Scrutton line of steamers sends about eight vessels every year to carry timber to London. It is in the nature of things unable to fix the dates of those sailings long beforehand, and the steamers sometimes return to the West Indies to complete their cargo. When they go direct the passage to London occupies about three weeks. They have a great reputation for comfort.

These steamers take mahogany for London, and it may be noted that all the logs put on board are roughly squared. Other steamers take mahogany for various parts in the United States, and the logs are round. In the United States they make use of

the bark and the small wood left after squaring. The bark and chips from mahogany destined for the English market are waste; in the American market they have a value.

I have already mentioned the weekly mail service from New Orleans, which is carried out by the United Fruit Company of Boston. This company is also running a four-weekly steam service from New York. The Orr Laubenheimer Company runs a steamer every fortnight from Mobile.

The following is a summary of the course of trade in 1907:—

Total Imports	...	...	...	£497,061
Total Exports	...	...	...	454,945
Of these Exports, Produce of				
British Honduras, represents...				£236,670
Imports Reported	...	...	...	188,780
Bullion and Coin	...	...	...	29,494

The imports of bullion amounted to £17,520.

Of the imports re-exported about £116,000 is represented by timber, rubber, and chicle, the produce of Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. The balance of over £72,000 represents goods imported from Europe and the United States, and re-exported.

In the year 1907 we took from the United Kingdom and British Colonies 27.53 of our imports, and only sent 21.76 of our exports. From the United States we took 56.34 of our imports, and sent 51.87 of our exports.

Our principal exports to the United Kingdom were:—

Mahogany (4,634,159 feet)	valued at	£58,107
Cedar (271,885 feet)	„	3,102
Logwood (6,256 tons)	„	24,547
Tortoiseshell (2,987 lbs.)	„	4,274
Chicle (9,236 lbs.)	„	600

£90,630

And to the United States:—

Mahogany (4,935,407 feet)	valued at	£52,327
Cedar (134,449 feet)	„	1,444
Logwood (406 tons)	„	1,842
Bananas (652,930 bunches)	„	32,829
Plantains (849,550 Nos.)	„	1,237
Cocoanuts (4,550,175 Nos.)	„	16,496
Rubber (24,968 lbs.)	„	3,900
Chicle (1,679,882 lbs.)	„	97,471
Sarsaparilla (2,246 lbs.)	„	138

£207,684

Before concluding I should like to say a few words as to the climate. In 1882, Mr. Benjamin Travers, who afterwards served for ten years in various public posts in British Honduras, was leaving England for Belize. He was standing on the break of the upper deck of the steamer, watching the baggage pass down to the hold. As one of his own trunks, marked “Belize, British Honduras,” was being passed, he heard another passenger remark, “That man is taking his coffin with him.” This was 27 years ago, and, judging from his present looks, it may be another 27 years before Mr. Travers will be in want of a coffin. But it is evident that the passenger in question thought that Belize was a very unhealthy place. I doubt if at any time the colony has deserved the evil reputation it bore as regards climate; but before 1894 the capital must certainly have been in a less satisfactory state as regards sanitation than it is now. This I am satisfied of, after perusal of the records and a consideration of the work that was done in the early nineties. We hope to still further improve the town, but even as we are it must be in an immensely better condition than it was 20 years ago.

In the district of Belize, which numbers about

15,000 people, of whom about 10,000 are in the town itself, the death-rate from malaria in 1907 was only 1.52 per 1,000, and this includes cases originating in other districts, and sent to Belize for treatment.

The death-rate of the colony in 1907 was 22.19 per 1,000, with a birth-rate of 36.64. In 1908 the death-rate was 24.17 per 1,000, with a birth-rate of 37.92.

In one respect the colony has a great advantage over the West Indian Islands. Its sea front is exposed to the full force of the prevailing wind. Owing to its long series of reefs and caves steamers can ride at anchor almost anywhere along the coast, where the water is deep. In other colonies steamers have to go to the leeward of the islands, and the principal towns are, therefore, not so highly favoured as are those of British Honduras, by reason of the refreshing breezes generally blowing.

As to maintenance of health I should say that practically the same rules apply as in the West Indian Islands. Every person should make himself acquainted with Professor Simpson's book on the subject. I do not follow all his precepts myself. I do not take quinine regularly; but, then, I believe I am rarely liable to attack by malaria infected mosquitoes. I disregard the Professor's advice as to cold baths, and I take them regularly every morning. But I do not advise anyone else to follow my example. The man who will benefit from a cold bath will take it even against advice. But I strongly advise people not to take cold baths when cold or tired, and I say that people who have malaria in their system run a risk in taking them.

As to stimulants, I think it would be well if people would follow Professor Simpson's advice in that matter, and abstain from alcohol till after the day's work is done, and take very little then. As a

beverage I recommend fresh lime juice, and I advise every settler to plant three or four lime trees, in order to supply himself. I do not know why limes should not be grown for the export of the juice; but, as no one seems to have tried it, I have not mentioned this as one of the existing or probable industries of the colony.

Every settler should make himself familiar with the facts as to the spread and prevention of yellow fever, malaria, and ankylostoma.

Yellow fever is of very rare occurrence, and is even less likely to be met with now, in view of the precautions taken in all the towns. But every man should make himself acquainted with the appearance of the *stegomyia fasciata* (or *stegomyia calopus*), which transmits it. And he should have some kind of magnifying glass to examine mosquitoes with. There are many kinds of mosquitoes, with striped legs and bodies, which are not *stegomyia*, and which it is hopeless to attempt to exterminate. But the *stegomyia fasciata*, if not too much crushed, can be recognised by its peculiar markings, and fortunately it is comparatively easy to get rid of it. It does not fly any great distance, and it ought to be possible for any planter to keep his buildings free of it, so as to make an outbreak of yellow fever on his plantation an impossibility.

The *anopheles*, or malaria-carrying mosquito, is also one which fortunately does not fly for long distances, and from its peculiar way of alighting on anything it is easily recognised; and it is quite possible, with care, to prevent its breeding within reach of your buildings. Care in this matter will amply repay the planter, as otherwise his labourers will have many ineffective days from sickness.

Ankylostomiasis is very rare among whites and negroes in British Honduras. It is prevalent in a

few Indian villages, which have not provided themselves with proper latrines, and in which people go barefoot. It is of great importance to a planter that he should know about this disease, as it may cause large numbers of his labourers to be unfit for work. But I think it may be effectively guarded against.

Lectures on tropical hygiene are given every year at the hospital in Belize, about Christmas time, and everybody who can should attend a course. But at any time the medical officers of the colony will be glad to instruct and advise. As to the steps to be taken in any particular place, in order to render it healthy, the prevention of malaria and ankylostoma is a matter of pecuniary importance to the employer of labour. The treatment of the diseases should, of course, always be entrusted to a medical man when possible; but an intelligent man, without medical training, may learn how to take the necessary steps for their prevention.

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